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Wearing the Story

Kirsten Stroven

Delta State University, strovenk@yahoo.com

Janice Haynes

Delta State University, jhaynes@deltastate.edu

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Wearing the Story

Kirsten Stroven, Janice B. Haynes

Delta State University

Keywords: Design, sustainability



Aesthetics and Visual Impact

This wearable art theatrical gown follows design principles to incorporate the elements into an unusual and compelling design work. The standing collar provides a focal point.

Contextual Review and Concept

An examination of Elizabethan designs from the Renaissance period, combined with the contemporary focus on apparel sustainability inspired the design context. The concept was to upcycle a vintage book into a wearable art theatrical gown incorporating Elizabethan elements. According to the online *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2015), upcycling is the treatment of an item that has already been used in a way that results in something of greater value than the original.

Process, technique, and execution

The materials included upcycled chicken wire, vintage book pages, cotton balls, fabric remnants of 50% rayon/50% polyester, and wide ribbon with a calligraphy surface print. Chicken wire was used for the skirt foundation, wrapping around the

waist and fastening in front. Fabric remnants formed a self-lined long dirndl skirt, encasing the chicken wire. The front skirt panels are short. Book pages were removed and hot glued onto the fabric. The waistband is comprised of a fabric tube stuffed with cotton balls. Flat pattern was used to create the corset-inspired top, made from fabric remnants and self-lined, with snap and button fasteners in the front. The high standing collar was created by gluing together rolled book pages stiffened with fabric stiffener.



Cohesiveness

The waistband is trimmed with the wide, calligraphy print ribbon, which is also tied into a bow to accent the garment back. This further highlights the book's text.

Design Contribution and Innovation

The fashion upcycling phenomenon seems to be a paradigm shift, representing a fresh way of thinking (Stewart, 2014). The Renaissance also embraced new ideas as it celebrated the arts. This period spawned the introduction of the printing press and focused on scholarly activities. This gown mimics, in many ways, the extreme gowns worn by Queen Elizabeth I. It features a kirtle-inspired skirt worn over a farthingale, a small, padded roll forming the waistband, inspired by the technique used to create the bum roll, and a high standing collar, similar to those often shown on Queen Elizabeth I (Tortora & Marcketti, 2015).

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